

San Jose: Officials seek public input on aesthetics of affordable housing near Diridon Station

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An affordable housing complex for families and seniors that will sit prominently near San Jose's Diridon Station is steps closer to breaking ground as officials seek public input about design.

The first community meeting for a new structure at 777 Park Ave. is scheduled for Jan. 29.

"The community meeting coming up is the next step in the process, in which we take input from our neighbors and other members of the community on the design and aesthetics of the plan," said Alex Sanchez, executive director of Housing Authority of Santa Clara County.

Once complete, the building, approved in September by city officials, is projected to house 82 low-income families and 100 seniors, according to the plans.

Santa Clara County Housing Authority staff and community members had urged council officials to approve a rezoning of the 2-acre parcel so that the project could move forward.

There had been controversy surrounding the project, in part because the building will generate little to no tax revenue for the city. There were also questions about whether the housing structure was the best use of land near the bustling train and bus station.

But a need for affordable units and a lack of future funding for such projects, due in part to the dissolution of redevelopment agency money in 2012, ultimately led to a "yes" vote from San Jose city council members.

The average rent in San Jose has increased 39 percent since 2010, according to Real Facts, the data service used by the housing department.

The proposed affordable housing complex would alleviate some strain for people who don't typically qualify for low-income housing as it is aimed at people earning between \$21,000 and \$63,000 per year.

The Jan. 29 community meeting is set for from 6:15 to 7:15 p.m. at the Billy DeFrank LGBT Community Center, 938 The Alameda.

To see the project design, visit 777parkavenue.com.